

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A washer comprising:
 - a washing chamber dimensioned to receive articles to be washed;
 - an intake assembly having a first blower and a first chamber fluidly connectable with the washing chamber;
 - plumbing to deliver a fluid to the washing chamber; and
 - a pressure equalization system operable to maintain an equalized pressure in the washing chamber, said pressure equalization system including:
 - a heating element disposed in the first chamber to heat air therein;
 - a first gate element movable between an open position and a closed position, said first gate element disposed between said first blower and said washing chamber for controlling fluid flow between the first chamber and the washing chamber, wherein said first gate element moves to the open position when said first blower is activated; and
 - a second gate element disposed in the first chamber and movable between an open position and a closed position to control air flow into the first chamber from the environment surrounding the washer, said second gate element disposed-located between said first blower and said first gate element ~~to control air flow into the first chamber from the environment surrounding the washer,~~
- wherein said first gate element and said second gate element move to the open position in response to a negative pressure condition in said washing chamber to increase the pressure therein.
2. (previously presented) The washer of claim 1, wherein said first and second gate elements are pressure-actuated flap valves.

Claims 3-4 (canceled)

5. (previously presented) The washer of claim 3, wherein a filter element is disposed in said first chamber to filter air before the air passes into said washing chamber.

Claim 6 (canceled)

7. (previously presented) The washer of claim 1, wherein said pressure equalization system includes a third gate element movable between an open position and a closed position, said third gate element movable to the open position when there is a positive pressure condition inside said washing chamber, to allow fluid to exit said washing chamber.

8. (previously presented) The washer of claim 7, wherein said third gate element is a mechanically-operated flap valve.

9. (previously presented) The washer of claim 7, wherein said washer further comprises an exhaust assembly for exhausting fluids from said washing chamber, said exhaust assembly including a second blower, wherein said third gate element is disposed between said washing chamber and the second blower.

10. (previously presented) The washer of claim 9, wherein said exhaust assembly includes an exhaust chamber and a fourth gate element movable between an open position and a closed position, said fourth gate element moving to the open position in response to a negative pressure condition in said exhaust chamber.

11. (previously presented) The washer of claim 10, wherein said fourth gate element is a pressure-actuated flap valve.

12. (previously presented) The washer of claim 9, wherein said exhaust assembly comprises an exhaust chamber including an opening for drawing fluid therein to prevent a negative pressure condition in said exhaust chamber.

13. (previously presented) The washer of claim 1, wherein said washer further comprises a recirculation pump having a frequency variator that gradually increases pump speed from a slow pump speed to a nominal pump speed, upon activation of the recirculation pump.